1 PETER: WEEK 7

# LIVING FAITHFULLY AS WE WAIT: 1 Peter 4:7–19

Name: Date:

**MEMORY VERSE**: 1 Peter 5:12b (NLT) Without looking, write what you remember.

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**HOW TO USE THIS STUDY**: Read 1 Peter 4:7–19 in the NLT; if possible, compare another translation. Circle repeated words and underline commands. Mark ? beside questions and ! beside discoveries. Start with CORE questions; GO DEEPER questions are optional. You do not have to finish every question. Bring what you discover to our discussion.

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN**: Last week: Jesus suffered for our sins to bring us to God, rose again, and now reigns over every authority (3:18–22). Because of Him, believers are called to live for God's will rather than their former desires…even when old companions misunderstand them (4:1–6). Now Peter asks: How should a church live together while waiting for Christ, especially when faithfulness becomes costly?

**NOTICE:** Main idea: Because Christ is Lord and the end of all things has drawn near, we can pray, love deeply, welcome others, serve through God's grace, and entrust ourselves to our faithful Creator while continuing to do good.

### HOW THIS PASSAGE FITS TOGETHER:

1 Peter 4:7–11: How we should pray, love, and care for one another as we follow Jesus.

1 Peter 4:12–16: How we should respond when following Jesus brings suffering or hardship.

1 Peter 4:17–19: How we can trust God to do what is right and remain faithful to Him, even when life is difficult.

### REMEMBER WHO THE FIRST HEARERS WERE:

Peter was writing to Christians living in different areas of the Roman Empire, in what is now Turkey. He called them "foreigners" or "exiles" because, as followers of Jesus, they no longer felt completely at home in the world around them (1 Peter 1:1). Following Jesus wasn't always easy for them. Some were insulted, talked about badly, or rejected because of their faith (1 Peter 2:12; 3:16; 4:4).

Not everyone faced the same difficulties. Some may have lost friendships, respect, or opportunities because they no longer participated in activities that went against their beliefs. Imagine how lonely or frightening that could have been!

This helps us understand why Peter placed so much importance on Christians loving, welcoming, encouraging, and caring for one another. They needed each other, especially when life was difficult.

### SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: THEN AND NOW

Our lives today are different from the lives of Peter's first readers. Not every time someone disagrees with us or criticizes us means we are suffering for our faith. And difficult things like sickness, grief, or losing someone we love are not necessarily suffering because we follow Jesus.

But no matter what kind of hardship we face, we can trust that God is faithful, that He cares for us, and that He wants us to continue doing what is right.

Remember, trusting God does not mean we must accept abuse, hide wrongdoing, or stay in a situation where we are unsafe. We can trust God while also seeking help and protecting ourselves.

# PART 1: PETER, HIS STORY, AND WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

## WHAT IS PETER TELLING US? [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 4:7–19. Write your answers to the following questions.*

In verses 7–11, what does Peter tell Christians to do?

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In verses 12–19, what does Peter tell Christians NOT to do? What does he encourage them to do instead?

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Are there any words or ideas Peter mentions more than once? What do you think he wants his readers to remember?

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## 1. PETER KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE AFRAID [CORE]

*Read Luke 22:31–34, 54–62 and John 21:15–19.*

*JUST THINK ABOUT IT: No written answers needed. We'll talk about some of these questions together.*

What happened when Peter became afraid?

How did Jesus treat Peter after he denied knowing Him?

What do you learn about Jesus from the way He treated Peter?

### NOW READ LUKE 22:32 AGAIN.

Jesus told Peter that after he returned to Him, he should strengthen others in their faith.

Think about this: Peter is now writing to Christians who are struggling and suffering because they follow Jesus. How might Peter's own experiences help him encourage them?

## 2. LET'S REMEMBER WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED [CORE]

*Look back at 1 Peter 1:3–5; 2:9–12; 2:21–25; 3:15, 18, 22; and 4:1–6.*

Over the past several weeks, Peter has taught us some wonderful truths about who we are, what Jesus has done for us, the hope we have, and how we should live.

As you read these verses, choose TWO things Peter has taught us that you especially want to remember.

### ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER:

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### ANOTHER THING I WANT TO REMEMBER:

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### JUST THINK ABOUT IT:

Why do you think Peter keeps reminding Christians of who they are in Jesus and what God has promised them, especially when life is difficult?

No written answer needed. We'll talk about this together.

### A. LOOK HOW PETER HAS GROWN! [GO DEEPER... OPTIONAL]

*Read Matthew 14:22–33; Acts 4:18–20; and Acts 5:40–42.*

Compare the Peter you see in these passages.

What differences do you notice?

What do you think helped Peter become more courageous?

What does Peter's story teach you about how God continues working in our lives, even when we struggle or fail?

*No written answers needed. Just think about what these passages reveal about Peter and about God.*

## PART 2: LIVING TOGETHER WHILE WE WAIT (4:7–11)

### THE END IS NEAR: SO HOW SHOULD WE LIVE? [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 4:7; Acts 2:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–2; and Matthew 24:36.*

What do these verses teach us about the “last days”?

Does Peter tell us when Jesus will return?

Instead of trying to figure out when Jesus will return, what does Peter tell Christians to do?

Why do you think it matters how we live while we wait?

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**SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: The New Testament teaches that the “last days” began with Jesus’ coming and God’s saving work through Him (Acts 2:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–2). Peter does not give a date for Jesus’ return. Instead of trying to predict when He will return, we are called to live faithfully while we wait. For more, read 2 Peter 3:3–9.**

### CLEAR MINDS AND PRAYER [CORE]

What does 4:7 say about clear thinking, self-control and prayer? Compare Luke 22:39–46. When people are frightened or stressed, what do they tend to forget? How might prayer help believers respond thoughtfully rather than react in fear?

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### LOVE THAT HOLDS PEOPLE TOGETHER [CORE]

*Read 4:8 alongside Proverbs 10:12, John 13:34–35 and 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Why might a pressured church especially need patient, forgiving love? What does “love covers a multitude of sins” mean…and what does it not mean?*

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### SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT LOVE COVERS MANY SINS?

Peter's words echo Proverbs 10:12. Jesus & Paul also teach us to love one another (John 13:34–35; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7). Love often means patience, forgiving ordinary mistakes, and not letting every hurt feeling damage a relationship.

But love does not mean ignoring abuse, hiding serious wrongdoing, or allowing harm to continue. We can forgive someone while still expecting accountability and setting wise boundaries. Forgiveness does not automatically restore trust; rebuilding trust may take time, honesty, and changed behavior. Forgiveness means I don't have to seek revenge. I can trust God to do what is right, even when I don't know how things will turn out.

How can we tell when to overlook an offense and when to address it? Ask yourself:

- Is this a small mistake I can forgive and let go?
- Is this repeated behavior or something causing real harm?
- Would overlooking it encourage further harm?
- How could I respond with both love and truth?

JUST THINK ABOUT IT: No written answer needed: How can we show grace without allowing someone to continue doing harm?

### HOSPITALITY THAT CREATES BELONGING [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 4:9, Romans 12:9–13, and Hebrews 13:1–2. Imagine that some of your friends no longer want anything to do with you because you follow Jesus.*

How would it feel to have other Christians welcome you into their homes and make you feel like you belong?

Why might it sometimes be difficult or inconvenient to welcome and care for others?

Why do you think Peter tells Christians to do this "without complaining"?

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### EVERY BELIEVER HAS SOMETHING TO GIVE [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 4:10–11, Romans 12:4–8, and 1 Corinthians 12:4–7.*

Who does God give gifts and abilities to?

Why does God give us these gifts? How does He want us to use them?

According to Peter, where does the strength to serve others come from?

How might these verses encourage someone who feels unimportant or thinks they don't have much to offer?

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### WHY THESE COMMANDS BELONG TOGETHER [CORE — DISCUSS TOGETHER]

JUST THINK ABOUT IT — No written answer needed. Read Acts 2:42–47 and Galatians 6:2, 9–10. How do prayer, love, hospitality, and service help a church remain faithful? What could our group do to help someone feel less alone?

**SOMETHING TO REMEMBER**: At the end of verse 11, Peter reminds us that everything we do should bring glory to God.

God has given each of us different gifts and abilities. These gifts are ways God shows His grace through us. They are not meant to make us feel more important than others or to get attention for ourselves.

Imagine being part of a small group of Christians meeting in someone's home. Everyone had something to offer, and everyone was needed.

Peter wants his readers to understand that every person matters and that God can use each of us to help and encourage others.

## PART 3: WHEN FOLLOWING JESUS BRINGS SUFFERING (4:12–16)

### DO NOT BE SURPRISED [CORE]

*Read 4:12 and compare 1 Peter 1:6–7. What does Peter say about fiery trials? Why might his hearers have needed this reminder? How is sharing in Christ's sufferings different from Jesus' unique suffering to save sinners (3:18)?*

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### JOY WITHOUT PRETENDING PAIN IS PLEASANT [CORE — DISCUSS TOGETHER]

JUST THINK ABOUT IT: No written answer needed. Read 1 Peter 4:13–14; Matthew 5:10–12; and Romans 8:16–18. Is Peter telling Christians to enjoy pain? What reasons for joy and hope does he give? What does he say about the Spirit resting on believers?

**SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: Peter isn't saying that Christians should be happy about suffering or that being hurt is a good thing. Instead, he reminds us that even when life is hard, we have reasons for joy. We belong to Jesus, God's Spirit is with us, and we have the hope of sharing in Christ's glory when He returns.**

Our joy comes from knowing Who is with us and what God has promised us, not from the suffering itself.

**GO DEEPER: OPTIONAL** Read **1 Peter 4:14 and Isaiah 11:2**.

Isaiah describes God's Spirit resting on the promised Messiah, Jesus. Peter tells suffering Christians that God's Spirit rests on them, too.

- What do you notice about the way God's Spirit is described in these two passages?
- Why might knowing that God's Spirit is with them have encouraged Christians who were being rejected or mistreated because of their faith?
- What does this teach us about God's care for His people?

### SUFFERING WITHOUT SHAME [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 4:15–16; 2:19–20; 3:16–17; Mark 8:34–38; and Romans 1:16.*

What is the difference between suffering because we have done something wrong and suffering because we follow Jesus?

In Peter's day, people might have been made fun of, rejected, or looked down on because they were Christians. Why do you think this would have been difficult for them?

How can we stand up for our faith without acting as though we are better than others?

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## PART 4: ENTRUST YOURSELF TO GOD (4:17–19)

### THE FAITHFUL CREATOR [CORE]

*Read 4:19 carefully. What TWO actions does Peter call suffering believers to take? Compare Psalm 121:1–2, Isaiah 40:28–31 and 1 Peter 2:23. What difference does it make that the God to whom we entrust ourselves is both our Creator and faithful?*

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### JUDGMENT BEGINS WITH GOD'S HOUSEHOLD [GO DEEPER]

*Read 1 Peter 4:17–19, Ezekiel 9:4–6, and Proverbs 11:31.*

Look closely at Ezekiel 9:4–6. What was happening among God's people that led to His judgment? Did God treat everyone the same way? What difference do you notice between the people? What does this passage teach you about how God views sin and wrongdoing, even among His own people?

Now look at 1 Peter 4:17–18.

What do you think Peter means when he says judgment begins with God's own household? Remember that Peter is writing to Christians who are suffering for doing what is right. Does that mean their suffering is necessarily punishment from God? Why or why not?

What do these verses help you understand about how seriously God takes sin and judgment?

Finally, read 1 Peter 4:19.

What two things does Peter tell suffering Christians to do?

What does Peter call God in this verse? What do those words tell you about who God is?

Why do you think Peter ends this difficult teaching by reminding believers of God's faithfulness?

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

What is one thing you have learned about God's justice or faithfulness from these passages?

Write down one discovery if you wish; the rest can be discussed together.

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**SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: These are difficult verses, and Christians understand some details differently. Some see the trials God allows His people to experience as testing and strengthening their faith. Others emphasize that God takes holiness and judgment seriously, beginning with His own household. These ideas may overlap. Peter clearly calls believers to trust their faithful Creator and keep doing good (4:19).**

We should never assume that someone's suffering means God is punishing them.

We may not always understand why hardships happen, so we should be careful about claiming to know God's reasons.

### FAITHFULNESS ACROSS THE OLD TESTAMENT [GO DEEPER]

*Read Daniel 3:16–18 and Jeremiah 29:4–7. One passage emphasizes refusing compromise; the other emphasizes seeking the good of a community while in exile. How do both illuminate Peter's call to entrust ourselves to God and continue doing good?*

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## PART 5: SEE GOD'S HEART AND RESPOND

### WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD? [CORE]

*Look back at 1 Peter 4:7–19.*

What do these verses show us about how God cares for His people?

What do we learn about God's love, kindness, and faithfulness?

How does knowing these things about God help you trust Him when life is difficult?

You don't need to write long answers. Choose one thing you've learned about God that is especially meaningful to you.

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### STAND FIRM IN GRACE [CORE]

*Read 1 Peter 5:10–12. What does Peter say God will do for His people? How does "stand firm in this grace" gather together the message of this week? Imagine hearing this letter aloud for the first time as a weary believer. Which promise would you hold onto?*

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### REFLECT HONESTLY: OPTIONAL GROUP DISCUSSION

Something I learned about GOD:

Something I learned about MYSELF:

Something that ENCOURAGED or CHALLENGED me:

Something I still DON'T UNDERSTAND:

### ONE FAITHFUL STEP

Where has fear, fatigue, rejection or uncertainty made prayer, love, hospitality or service difficult? Choose one small, wise action this week…not to earn grace, but because you stand in it.

My next faithful step:

### A PRAYER TO CLOSE

Ask God for clear thinking when afraid, love when relationships are strained, generous hearts, strength to serve, and courage to do good.

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### MEMORY VERSE CHECK: 1 Peter 5:12b (NLT)

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